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ANIMADVERSIONS
ON THE
LAST SPEECH
OF
William Viſcount Stafford
WHO WAS
BEHEADED
ON
TOWER-HILL,
FOR
HIGH TREASON
In Conſpiring the Death of the King, &c.
on *Wedneſday, December 29th.* 1680.

DYing *mens words* are generally much regarded: and *Proteſtants* who make Conſcience of their own words, and count it a Horrid Crime to ſpeak otherwiſe than they think when they are dying, may be ready to take the meaſures of others by themſelves, and to Judge thoſe guileleſs, who when they are dying, aſſert their Innocency with the higheſt aſſeverations: But they will find very great reaſon to alter their opinion, if they take but due notice how very clear

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the Evidence was by which this *miserable Lord* was cast, and if withal they do but fully understand the Popish Principles, which destroy all confidence in their words living and dying.

Fully to convince *Protestants*, my design shall be to prove that by the common Doctrine receiv'd amongst them, they are furnished with expedients, whereby they may deny what is most true, and affirm what is most notoriously false, and that with the most *solmn Oaths* or *dreadfullest Imprecations*, and yet neither lie nor be forsworn, nor any way sin in the least degree, *and this they may do even when dying*. Their main artifice is that which they call *Mental Equivocation*, because of a double sense in some proposition partly expresst and partly reserv'd in their minds, so that a thing may be true in their own sense by vertue of this *Mental Reservation*, but false in the sense of all that hear it. The use of this is allowed by all sorts of *Papists*, and particularly the *Jesuits*, it is an Art more dear to them, and oftner used by them then any other fraudulent art whatever, because this fraud is more easie, less discernable, and the advantage of it admirable, and therefore no wonder that they do not decline it at Trials in Courts of Judicature. No nor when they are dying and approaching the Tribunial of the *Great Judge*, tho truth and sincerity is then, if ever, necessary. But this our *Poor deceased Lord* hath more pertinent instances of those of his Principles and Circumstances to encourage him with *Oaths and Asseverations* to assert a falshood and deny the Truth.

To instance in their Practises, Father *Garnet*, *Whitebreads Predecessor in Office and Practices*, and one concerned in the Gunpowder Plot was notoriously guilty herein, for he denied that, by solemn Oaths and Imprecations before the Lords Commissioners, which was afterwards proved upon him, and his only Plea for himself was this Doctrine of *Equivocation*.

So likewise *Tresham* another of the *Powder Plotters* said, that *Garnet* was privy to the Treason, but afterwards just before his death took it upon his Salvation that he had accused *Garnet* wrongfully, and that he had not seen him of sixteen years before, and so died. But this his *Protestation and Oath* was soon after proved notoriously false, yea *Garnet* himself confessed that within sixteen years she had seen him many times, whereupon being asked what he thought of *Treshams dying Oath and Protestation*, he answered *Possibly Tresham meant* etc. *Equivocation*.

And this very Doctrine of Equivocation was justified by *Garnet*

in a Manuscript left by him, which was communicated by King *James*, to the famous *Casaubon*.

Both the stories before named may be found at large in the History of the Gun-powder Treason, and in the Proceedings against those Traytors.

By this we see, that these things have been practised of old, and justified by their Teachers as lawful even at the hour of death, therefore we need not be surpriz'd to find any Papist using this art in his *Last Speech*.

But their Principles are further considerable, of which take some Account.

First *by their Doctrine*, they may lawfuly say what is false making use of a *mental Reservation*, and tho it be a gross untruth in it self as expresly, and they know it to be so, and use it with an intent to deceive others, yet they do not reckon it to be *a lie*, and consequently *no sin*, and so need not fear using it when going out of the world. This is affirmed in distinct Treatises of this subject by *Father Parsons*, *Navar*, *Sanche* and others.

And here let the World be Judge what regard is due to the words of those, tho they be the words of dying men, whose Doctrine makes the most guilty persons in the world, that if they persist in a false defiance of their innocency even unto death, yet by this method they teach them it will be no *lie* at all, nor any sin.

This may be enough to satisfie us concerning the expressions whereby this Lord disclaims his guilt, which are not a few, as in the first Paragraph of his Speech, I do most truly in the presence of the Eternall Omnipotent, and All-knowing God, Protest upon my Salvation, that I am as Innocent as it is possible for any Man to be, so much as in a thought of the Crimes laid to my charge. [The old canting expression, *as Innocent as the Child unborn*, is here varied.] In the third Paragraph, Since my long imprisonment I have considered often what could be the Original cause of my being thus accused, since I knew my self not culpable, so much as in a thought; and I cannot

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cannot believe it to be upon any other Account then my being of the Church of *Rome*, In the forth Paragraph. To my great and unspeakable grief *I* have offended God in many things by many great Offences; but, *I* give him most humble thanks, not in any of those Crimes of which *I* was accused. In the sixth Paragraph. And if *I* had known of any Treason, and should thus deny it, as *I* do now upon my Salvation at this time, *I* should have no hope of Salvation. In the eleventh Paragraph. *I* do now upon my Death and Salvation aver that *I* never spoke one word either unto *Oats* or *Turbervil*, or, to my knowledge, ever saw them until my Tryal, and for *Dugdale*, *I* never spoke to him of any thing but about a Foot-boy, or Foot-man, or Foot-race, and never was then alone with him. In the twelfth and thirteenth Paragraphs. *I* hope *I* have made it appear that *I* have some Conscience, for if *I* had none certainly *I* would have saved my life by acknowledging my self guilty; which *I* could have done, tho *I* know *I* am not in the least guilty, and having some Conscience make very ill use of it; for *I* throw my self into Eternal pain by thus plainly and constantly denying thus at my Death, the knowledge of what *I* am accused of, in the least. *I* have said thus much in discharge of my Conscience, and do aver upon my Salvation what *I* have said to be really true. And in the very last Paragraph. *I* do with my last Breath truly assert my Innocency, and hope the Omnipotent All-seeing, Just God will deal with me accordingly. Let the Reader judge how true these Protestations of his innocency are like to be, after he hath considered *the fairness of his Tryal, the clearness and fulness of the Evidence against him; and their Doctrines, which thus allow them to go out of the world with Lies in their mouths.*

Secondly, They maintain that when they may lawfully speak what is false, they may lawfully Swear it; thus Father *Parsons*, *Lessius*, *Sanchez*, and *Jo. Sanctius*,

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This is their Doctrine, whereby it is evident, that if a Person be Accused and Condemned for a Design to murther his Prince, though he design it as much as any Assassinate ever did, yet he may not only deny it, and yet *not Lye*, by vertue of a *Mental Equivocation*, but though he be as guilty as any Person that ever was condemned in the World, yet he may assert his Innocency with Oaths; and notwithstanding, by this Art he may free himself *from all Guilt of Perjury, and all other Sin*. And this quite destroys their Credit as to all their *Asseverations and Oaths*, how many and horrid soever they be, when they think themselves concerned to Equivocate.

He that would be believed against such Evidence as convicted this *Lord* had need be a Man of more than ordinary Credit. But Men of his Lordships Principles are quite broke as to this, for their Credit is blasted by their Doctrine.

Thirdly, They may use such *Mental Reserves* or *Equivocations*, when they are urged by others not to use any, or when themselves profess and swear they use none; So *De Secund. Bonacina Sanchez*, and *Fa. Parsons* in his *Treatise of Equivocations*, approved by *Garnet* and *Blackwell*: One passage whereof I will here give you. *If* (saith he) *the Incompetent Judge shall further ask, whether you do not Equivocate, you may answer no, but with another Equivocation: If again suspecting you he urges, whether this third time you do not Equivocate, then the third time also say no, but with another secret Equivocation; and so as often as he shall ask the like, likewise by Equivocating say you do not Equivocate.*

Fourthly, By their Doctrine they may Lawfully use such *Mental Reserve* or *Equivocation*, which in their Account makes their *Speaking or Swearing falsly to be innocent*. Thus *Filliucius* saith, *That Equivocation in Rigour is no Lye nor Perjury*. So *Toletus*, *Equivocation may be used, especially when it is expedient to conceal a thing*. So *Bonacina*, *It is not* (saith he) *unlawful to Equivocate as often as any Inconvenience or Injury is like to befall us by speaking Plainly*.

Can therefore any Persons be more highly concerned to keep any thing secret, than these Men are to conceal their *Plot*; both for the dangerous Consequences of the Discovery, and the Advantage of concealing it? They cannot more effectually promote the *Plot*, than by perswading us there is none: and so making us the more secure, they think hereby to stagger [weak minded Protestants, who cannot think that any Christian dares go out of the World with a Lye in his Mouth. They think also hereby to weaken the Credit of the Witnesses, and to disparage the Justice of the Nation. And Lastly, his Lordship, and the rest of the Plotters, executed before him, may think to die as Martyrs in the Account of the Papists, and as Innocent in the Judgment of many others. But on the other hand, if his *Lordship*, or those executed before him, had

been so ingenuous to have confessed what they knew of this Hellish Plot, they had broke the Neck of their own Design, which seems dearer to them than their Lives, or any other Concerns; they had encouraged others of the Conspirators to have followed their Leaders herein, and so the Plot had been wholly dissected, and Popery it self in danger to be rendred odious to the whole Christian World, and for ever hereafter to be abhorred and renounced by all that own the Christian Name, as utterly repugnant to Christianity, and to be abhorred by Mankind as that which bids Defiance to Humanity it self.

Having thus sufficiently answered those Passages in his Speech that assert his Innocency, come we next to his false Commendation, and Character of their Church. In the third Paragraph (saith he) **I have no reason to be ashamed of my Religion, for it teacheth nothing but the right Worship of God, Obedience to the King, and due Subordination to the Temporal Laws of the Kingdom. And I do submit to all Articles of Faith believed and taught in the Catholick Church, believing them to be most consonant with the Word of God. And whereas it hath so much and often been objected, that the Church holds that Sovereign Princes Excommunicated by the Pope, may by their Subjects be Deposed and Murdered; as to the Murder of Princes I have been taught as a matter of Faith, in the Catholick Faith that such Doctrine is Diabolical, Horrid and Detestable, and contrary to the Law of God, Nature and Nations; and as such from my heart I renounce and abominate it. As for the Doctrine of Deposing of Princes, I know some Divines of the Catholick Church hold it, but as Able and Learned as they have writ against it: but it was not pretended to be the Doctrine of the Church, that is any point of Catholick Faith. Wherefore I do here in my Conscience declare, that it is my True and Real Judgment that the same Doctrine of Deposing Kings is contrary to the Fundamental Laws of this Kingdom, Injurious to Sovereign Power, and consequently would be in me, or any other of His Majesty's Subjects, Impious and Damnable.** That their Church teacheth the contrary to the right Worship of God, and Obedience to Kings is very easie to prove: But it is a Work that hath been so often done already, that here we shall wave it. To come then to the nice Point, *viz.* the **King-killing Doctrine.** This is a Charge upon them of so horrid a nature, that I do not wonder that they all use their utmost endeavours to perswade the World that they hold no such Doctrine. That *Mariana* held it, *Gavan* himself owned:

owned: *Sanctarellus* his Book was a little more favourable to Kings than *Mariana's*, and yet this was printed at *Rome*, and approved by *Mutius Vitelleſcus* the General of the Jeſuits. *Ribadinera*, *Scribanius* under the name of *Bonarſcius*, *Becanus*, *Oreſterus*, do partly praiſe and partly defend *Mariana*. And wherein doth *Emanuel Sa* come ſhort of *Mariana* in that particular, or *Becarus* in his *Engliſh Controverſies*; which are approved of, not only by divers *Biſhops*, but by the Provincial Jeſuits of *Portugal* and *Germany*: Yea, a whole *Univerſity* approves of it. To which add *Fa. Campian*, who may be in ſtead of all; he declares, *That all the Jeſuits ſpread far and wide through the whole World have entred into a League to make war on all Heretical Kings in any manner whatſoever; nor will they deſpair of effecting it ſo long as one Jeſuit remains in the World.* In *Epiſt. ad Concil. Reg. Angl. p.* 22.

The *Church* of *Rome* doth declare, that the *Pope* hath power to depoſe *Kings*, eſpecially for Hereſie. This is not only the Opinion of all ſorts of their Authors, but is eſpecially determined by their *Popes*, and the Decrees of *General Councils*. They do alſo declare, that *Kings* being Depoſed, any one may kill them, at leaſt by the *Pope's* Order. For this we have the declared Senſe of the whole Body of the Jeſuits in *France*, [than whom none of the Society in any part of the World were more favourable to Kings,] in an Apology for their Doctrine on this Subject to *Henry* the fourth; yet there they declare in the words of *Kalentia*, conſonant to the Doctrine of *Aquinas*, *Caietan*, *Soto*, *Covarruvius*, *Salonius*, and others: *That a Tyrant, who has no juſt Title, but uſurps Authority, may be killed by any one.* Now there is none of them who have the uſe of Reaſon will deny, but a *King* depoſed by the *Pope* is ſuch a Tyrant, a meer Uſurper, without ſuch a juſt Title; and therefore they cannot deny but it is their Doctrine; That a *King* Depoſed by the *Pope* may be killed by any one.

In the Seventh and Sixteenth Paragraphs he prays for the King, acknowledging him **his Lawful King and Sovereign, and denying that any Power on Earth can Legally allow him, or any Body elſe to lift up a Hand againſt his Legal Authority, and then praying for him, that he may enjoy all Happineſs in this World, and the World to come**, he would undoubtedly have it thought, that he had no deſign to kill the *King*, who can pray for his proſperous Reign. But it need not ſeem ſtrange that any of them ſhould Equivocate in their way of Praying, ſince their Church allows of plain Lyes in their publick Liturgies, which divers of their own Authors expreſs themſelves ſenſible of.

To give one inſtance of this in *Fa. Garnet*, he compoſed ſome Prayers for the good Succeſs of the *Powder Plot*, which he uſed amongſt his Party; and being charged with it, anſwered like ſuch a

Jeſuit:

Jesuit: He said, *He made not those Prayers with that meaning that the thing might fall out according to the mind of the Conspirators, but rather cross to their desires; that so the Safety of King and Kingdom might be provided for.* So that when he prayed for the Ruin of the *King* and *Kingdom*, his meaning was that they might be preserved and prosper. So when any of this sort of Men, I mean *Romish Zealots*, pray for the King's prosperous Reign. why may not their meaning be his utter Destruction? For this is altogether as likely as the other.

One thing is observable, that in his Prayer for the King he twice comes in with the word *Legal*. So in the sixth Paragraph. **He would discover if he knew of an Illegal Dangerous Plot.** But the Question will here be, what he means by *Legal* and *Illegal*. By their Principles, if the *King* be Excommunicated, his Authority is not *Legal*, and therefore the *Plot* against him not *Illegal*. This Artifice, though the thing be false in it self, yet it may be innocently asserted by him.

His Temper at Death was none of the most Christianlike, for he could not forbear [though he pretendedly forgave them] vilifying the Witnesses against him, by calling them **Perjured Fellows:** But what better can be expected from such Men. And he seems designedly to intimate that his Tryal was Illegal by this subtil Insinuation: **I shall say little to my Tryal; and whether it were all according to the known Law, I am too much a Party to say much of it: If it were not so, God forgive him or them that were the Cause of it.** Certainly never Man had a more Honourable, Just and Legal Tryal, and consequently less Cause for such a Malicious Insinuation.

To conclude, We have great reason to believe that this Speech was contrived for the promoting of their grand Plot, upon which, as a true Be-Jesuited Zealot, his Heart was so much set [the Catholick Interest being so deeply concerned in it,] that the thoughts of Death could not divert him. Now, if we are found so Weak and Facile as to believe these fraudulent Expressions of this Lord, and others that were Executed before him, against so much Rational Evidence, then their Work is in a manner done; and they will do more at their Deaths by putting out our Eyes, than they could in all their Lives. We cannot in Justice, Reason or Charity believe them against Such Evidence, who think they may Lawfully deceive us when dying, and apprehend it to be the great Interest of their Cause so to do.

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